



**CITY COUNCIL PLANNING RETREAT
SUMMARY MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2025
9:00 A.M.**

Mayor & City Council

Mayor Anthony S. Ford
Mayor Pro Tem LaKeisha Gantt – Dist. 1
Councilmember Alphonso Thomas – Dist. 2
Councilmember Kyle D. Berry, Sr. – Dist. 3
Councilmember Yolanda Barber – Dist. 4
Councilmember Elton Alexander – Dist. 5

Administration

Vacant, City Manager
Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk
Frank Milazi, City Treasurer/CFO
Quinton Washington, City Attorney

Mission: Is to provide visionary leadership and superior municipal services that enhance the quality of life for citizens while creating a welcoming business atmosphere focused on sustainability and expansion of tourism and cultural events.

Staff Present: Decius Aaron, Public Works Director, Ryan Anderson, Community Development Director, Demeatrius Ivey, Information Technology Director, Rosalynd Rawls, Executive Assistant to Mayor & Council, Gerald Sanders, Economic Development Director, Shana Thornton, Public Information Officer, Frank Trammer, Police Chief, Charisma Webster, Events Manager, and Renee Wheeler, Human Resources Manager

Day 2 Retreat Planning Session – Facilitated by: Mayor Ford (Acting City Manager)

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ford at 11:36 a.m.

All members were present except Councilmember Berry and Councilmember Thomas.

Project Status/Updates – Decius Aaron, Public Works Director and Adam Price, Falcon Design Consultants

Mr. Price reviewed the Tye Street Project, noting the project has been approved by the State, and noted the city's Engineers have questions/concerns about the right-of-way acquisitions required for the project; noted the trail is predominately 8' wide, with no beauty strips, noting there was not enough room.

Councilmember Alexander noted the PATH Foundation may be concerned about not having the beauty strips along the path.

Mr. Price noted they have talked to the PATH Foundation and advised them of the restrictions from an engineering standpoint and noted the walkway along the city's property.

Councilmember Barber asked if it would have been more suitable to place the path on the opposite side of the street.

Mr. Price noted utilities can be an issue, and that the Red Oak Road/Flippen Road culvert is an issue and will be very costly.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt asked what the city should do now, in the event they would want to sell the property with the suggested path on Tye Street.

Mr. Price suggested the city re-plat the property with the walkway along the city's property, noting the ditch is servicing stormwater runoff; and noted that per the discussion with Councilmember Thomas, the sidewalks were to be 5' to the park as not to invade on the homeowner's properties, noting the PATH Foundation cannot ignore utility conflicts; and also noted because of drainage issues in the Tye Street area, the sewer cannot be moved.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt noted that she met with the family who owns the lot adjacent to the city's property who are willing to deed the property to the city at no cost and will follow up.

Mr. Price noted GDOT approved the path along Hwy. 42, and what is needed is an easement document from the First Baptist Church, tying the path together from N. Henry Blvd. to City Hall to the Amphitheater; and noted the contractor, DAF Concrete, who had been working with the easements, cannot be located.

Mr. Price gave an update on the Alleyway Project, noting the request to change the parking lot from gravel to paved; noting the easements have been secured, and that the estimate submitted four years ago was \$395,000.00.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt noted the gravel lots were part of the RSVP Plan, and noted if the area is paved, it would have to be torn out, and is why gravel was the option; and suggested a community grease trap in the downtown area to market to restaurants.

Mr. Price and Mr. Aaron both stated the grease traps should be individual and underground.

Councilmember Barber noted there were projects that were bonded prior to her being elected to the City Council and asked staff to provide the status of projects, and wants to see the City Council prioritize the projects.

Councilmember Berry joined the meeting at 12:22 p.m.

Mr. Price gave an overview of the Signalization project @ Country Club Dr., noting decorative printed pavers and black mast poles will be installed, and the cost of the last poles installed was \$200,000.00 per pole; and noted that developers will be asked to pay for the fourth leg.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt exited the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Councilmember Barber asked about the city's use of Impact Fees.

Mr. Anderson stated the Impact Fees are used citywide for Parks and Recreation, and roads and infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Price noted he is working with Mr. Aaron on Stormwater Billing and will complete the report by May 31st; noted Falcon completed a Boundary Survey for the new Maintenance Shop at 351 Taylor Drive; and reviewed the Pates Creek Bridge that was annexed into the city by referendum, noting Henry County received recommendations to repair the bridge prior to the annexation, and that the information should be available from the County.

Mr. Price reviewed the plans to improve the paths to Memorial Park in the Tye Street neighborhood, where 8' paths are proposed and converting sidewalks to 5'; noting several homes have utility issues due to very little right of way and the water main is close to the edge of the road, and noted they are putting together a set of plans for the city to analyze, noting the streets in the area have aged; and noted the plan has been reviewed for piping to be installed in the area.

Mr. Price referenced a plan for Jennings Street where there are two homes near the entrance of Memorial Park and suggested adding removable bollards; and referenced the Rock Quarry Road extension design of roadway with \$2million dollars allocated by the City of Stockbridge.

Councilmember Barber noted no previous Council can bind another Council, and that the proposed developments are in District 4, and she is unaware of.

Mr. Price stated he will get with the County on the proposed Rock Quarry Rd. and T-intersection of Rock Quarry Rd. & North Henry Blvd. and determine the right-of-way.

Mr. Aaron noted the Bid Opening for the Rock Quarry Road Widening project will take place on April 23rd; and noted he was advised by Roque Romero that the County will resurface Hudson Bridge Rd., East Lake Pkwy., Eagles Landing Pkwy., and Flippen Road from North Henry Blvd. to its end.

Mr. Aaron reviewed the approved T-SPLOST list; noted the Brush Creek Trail project will be presented at the March 25th Work Session meeting; and noted the Public Works department needs to purchase multiple trucks and equipment.

Mr. Milazi noted there is \$2.5million dollars available in Capital Improvements, and the funds would need to be reallocated, and would be ready to present at the April 14th meeting.

Mr. Aaron noted the Bid Opening for the grassy area project at the Amphitheater are due on March 24th and will be presented at the March 25th Work Session meeting. Councilmember Berry noted he visited the Sandy Springs Amphitheater, where they were installing the turf during the City Council's last visit, and the project has been completed and looks great.

Councilmember Alexander suggested a product of some kind to be installed in the Pit area of the Amphitheater to help to absorb the heat.

Mr. Sanders gave an update on the Court Renovation, noting the project has been completed with a cost of \$73,471.66; noted the Wayfinding Signs Phase I signs will begin installation on May 1; noted the city is in talks with Norfolk Southern regarding a parking lot on .54 acres and installing 35-40 parking spaces, similar to downtown Locust Grove, noting pricing has not yet been received for the project; noted the PATH Foundation item is scheduled to be presented at the March 25th Work Session meeting; and the Georgia Power Utility Relocation Plan Preliminary Engineering Agreement has been signed in the amount of \$13,000.00.

Mr. Milazi referenced OpenGov, stating he has met once with the representatives, and that the software does not integrate with the city's financial software, Incode, and that staff would be required to duplicate information; noted the city has invested \$200,000 in the product coordinated through the City Manager's office.

Councilmember Barber noted the OpenGov software and project was approved in February 2023, and because the program has not been implemented, the city should renegotiate the contract; noting the City is paying for something that has not happened, and there needs to be a conversation with OpenGov about the rollout.

Mr. Milazi stated he will review the contract and meet with OpenGov representatives and ask them to report on a potential or expected rollout date, and report back to the Council, noting the efforts will be coordinated with the City's Management Analyst, Jamayca Cole, who has been the Point of Contact for the project.

Amphitheater – Harold Young, Amphitheater Consultant

Mr. Young stated the Stockbridge Amphitheater has made a big impact on the Atlanta market, and that seeking out artists must begin in October, and noted the marketing and media has started earlier for the 2025 concert season.

Mr. Young referenced the replacement of grass, noting it is not financially feasible to continue to move chairs in/out of the area and cut the grass, and that improvements to the Amphitheater in other areas will continue in phases.

Mr. Young reviewed the marketing strategies for the upcoming concert season, noting the Stockbridge Police Department has recommended the city adopt a Clear Bag Policy for patrons entering the venue.

Ms. Thornton expressed concerns over getting the messaging out prior to the concerts starting, and to those patrons who have already purchased tickets.

Councilmember Berry suggested having lockers for patrons at the gate.

Councilmember Barber agreed with the lockers and also expressed concern with getting the message out, especially being so close to the first concert and needs more details on the logistics of the lockers.

Mr. Young referenced a meeting with the CVB (Convention and Visitors Bureau) regarding hotels in the area, and a 3-day Southern Soul Festival in Stockbridge the weekend following Labor Day, where Stockbridge would be a destination, and noted Mayor Pro Tem Gantt would provide more information on the Southern Soul Festival and noted a Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis tribute on August 30th and August 31st.

Councilmember Alexander stated the city needs to have Reader Boards in place for visibility with concert information, and other pertinent information regarding the city.

Mr. Sanders noted the Digital Signs are moving forward.

Councilman Alexander noted the Digital Signs have already been approved by the City Council and designed by Falcon Design Consultants.

Mr. Young stated Amphitheater flags have been ordered, and there will all be billboard visibility advertising the concerts; noted there are rentals for the Amphitheater; reviewed Part I, and Part 2 of the 2025 Concert Series; noted the Rideshare locations have changed, and that getting the word out will be critical; and referenced the rigging manuals are incorrect and that the corrective action has been included in the H J Russell proposal along with black curtains, an electrical panel, stage and Amphitheaters repairs.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt rejoined the meeting at 3:43 p.m.

Mr. Young noted Big Chic would be the new concessions vendor, and Whiskey Tee's will be the alcohol vendor with a two-year contract.

Councilmember Barber asked if security services, janitorial, ticketing, alcohol or concessions were advertised.

Mr. Milazi referred to the contract whereas all responsibilities of the finances are under the city.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt noted the decision-making for the Amphitheater remains with the city, as well as finances.

Councilmember Barber noted that considering the contract, once the city identifies the vendors, that should be given to Mr. Young to put forward; noted the city has not been operating in the right way, as she has been asking for monthly financial reporting, and that discussions should be had with the Governing Body prior to contracts being executed.

Mr. Young stated that no one from the city has sat down with him to ask what is required to run the operations of the Amphitheater, and that he was given marching orders to make it happen.

Mr. Milazi stated the process needs to change with approval of the City Council.

Councilmember Barber noted she has been asking questions for four years about the Amphitheater, noting it is a public venue, not a private venue, and that it is a major issue when information is not known to the public.

Councilmember Alexander motioned to approve a Resolution for a Clear Bag Policy and to select a provider to manage locker service for the Amphitheater; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gantt. Councilmember Barber questioned the unknown cost for the locker service provider. Councilmember Berry noted the service would be customer to customer transactions with no cost to the city. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt presented *Boots on the Ground – Southern Soul Festival* in coordination with the King George concerts September 5 – 7th, with Stockbridge being a destination, and will include several activities including line dancing, and card games, and perhaps eliminating BridgeFest.

Councilmember Alexander noted Henry County has agreed to partner with the City of Stockbridge with HispaniFest during BridgeFest and cover all expenses outside of the Amphitheater.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt requested approval and support of the *Boots on the Ground Southern Soul Festival* in collaboration with the Amphitheater concert September 5 -7th.

Councilmember Barber noted that she supports the idea, however, wants to make sure the logistics are in place not to disrupt the lives of the residents in the area, and to make sure they are affected as little as possible.

There was a consensus of the Council to move forward with the *Boots on the Ground Southern Soul Festival* as presented.

Mr. Young made a request to the Council for a meeting going forward, prior to the Retreat to answer and address any questions or concerns regarding the Amphitheater management.

Councilmember Barber referenced her requests that she has made for two years to resurface Valley Hill Rd. and add lights and trails, and questioned how the funding is now available to resurface Hudson Bridge Road and Eagles Landing Parkway.

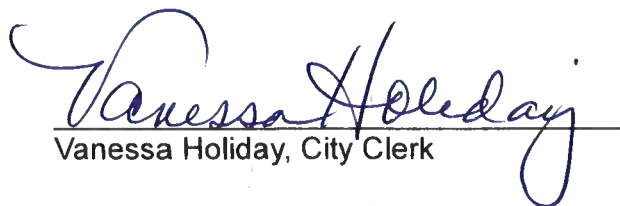
Mayor Pro Tem Gantt noted there have been financial challenges.

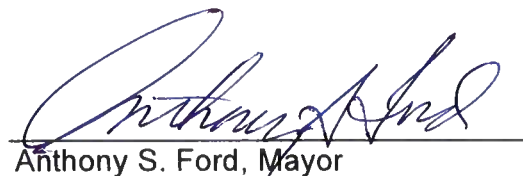
Councilmember Alexander noted the County gets a better deal because they have a greater volume to resurface.

Mr. Aaron noted it is better to collaborate with the County when city roads and county roads connect, which would be more cost effective.

Councilmember Barber emphasized the importance of rebuilding the relationship with the County in hopes of collaborating on future projects.

Respectfully submitted by:


Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk


Anthony S. Ford, Mayor